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585 826 It is believed that if a newly married girl has an itching sensation in the vagina while visiting her father's house, her husband will come to her the next night. Similarly, if a young husband is away from his wife, for example while grazing buffaloes, and he has an involuntary erection, this means that he will enjoy his wife within a day or two.

585 841 Sometimes a wedding is postponed a few days if the bride has a menstrual period immediately before the planned date. This is not because of the probable inconvenience at consummation, but simply because she cannot be allowed into the house until seven days after her period owing to a pollution taboo. And as we have suggested, a bride generally does not sleep with her husband immediately. She is made to sleep with other children in the family or other members of the household until her next period. Only then will the consummation occur, because the parents may want to make sure the girl was not pregnant prior to the wedding. Otherwise if they are quite certain she had a period a week or two before the wedding, and she is considered old enough, the parents may permit the consummation quickly. Even so, it is usually impossible for the bride to be 585 deflowered until the third night because she is busy with a ceremonial visit to her own father's house and village, or with those relatives who are still visiting her. On the fourth evening however it may be possible to put the couple in a separate room or another house—a widow's house is easily vacated for this purpose. The groom goes to this "bed-house" after supper and waits there while some women persuade the bride to go and join him. Usually she is shy, and even if she is eager to go she pretends to be shy. When the shyness is genuine it is because the marriage has been arranged, and the bride does not know how her husband will behave. Some girls, and even the occasional youth, are so ignorant about things that they do not know why they are being sent off to a separate room together. Such 586 an awkward situation can soon lead to divorce, or to further sexual 864 training: an informant explained how he was asked (by his wife) 835 to have a gentle intercourse with his wife's newly married sister, since she had been terrified on the night of the consummation. In general, 755 if a newlywed husband or wife expresses fear of this event, an old woman crushes the leaf of the cockspur flower and makes the person swallow it in milk or water beforehand: this cures the fear.

881 826 Badagas believe the hymen exists only until puberty, when it is automatically ruptured by the first menses. (A few girls do not mens-

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truate, I was told, until 18 or 19, long after they have married.) Husbands thus attach little importance to presence or absence of a hymen. A bride is nonetheless supposed to be a virgin on her first marriage, and so on the morning after her defloration her parents-in-law look for a bloodstain on the bed. If she is not in fact a virgin one of the couple will usually draw a little blood from some part of the body so as to make a stain. Whether or not the groom is responsible for her previous loss of virginity he will want a bloodstain to be found, for otherwise his parents may think he has fallen in love with a loose, unworthy girl. Badagas proverbially take a dim view of young women: "A young ox and a young girl are both inconstant: do not trust them" (Metz 1864: 94).

They have a kind of second wedding ceremony, held at about the seventh month of a girl's first pregnancy. The sexual aspect of this second ceremony is that on the following night the couple are supposed to sleep together and have intercourse. While the pregnant girl is not impure at the time of the actual ceremony, both she and her husband are considered so on the following morning. It is a ritual requirement that she carry all of their bedding to some stream, but not the usual water source, and wash it clean.

3.10. Badaga men, and less commonly women, can get a disease called *kanne no:* ("first sickness"), which is caused either by a young man's first sexual experience or by too much sexual activity in his early married years. It is a relatively rare illness, recognizable from the face and the accompanying fever. A patient is served only "cooling" foods till he recovers; he rests at home, and is also given *kodaṅgu soppu* (made from velvety patchouli, etc.) as for any fever. The parents stop the couple from sleeping together for the time being; until fully recovered the patient will be permitted little or no coitus by his elders. This illness is said to be quite dangerous, whereas "too little" intercourse is not thought to have any bad effect on the body.

Menstrual Practices

3.11. Badaga therapists do not know why menstruation occurs, and simply attribute it to God's will. The intervals can vary, I was told, from 16 to 40 days, tending to be shorter in fat women. Among young women menses occurs every 18, 19 or 20 days, with 22 days as perhaps the maximum. With older women the period comes on

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path between the priest's home and the temple, or go beyond the territorial boundary of her own village. She must not collect dry firewood, lest she become barren. She must not face the village priest; so that when he starts out from his home for the temple he shouts "hu:hu:" (or rings a handbell if it is a Lingayat village) as a warning to *all* menstruating women to hide themselves. The girl must cook her own food while she is in seclusion, and cannot be supplied with it already cooked from her own home. Instead, every household in the village should give the girl a small amount of rice, chili, salt, pulse, millet flour or vegetables. Such gifts are not to be returned later in equal measurs.

3.12. A girl's first seclusion is for no fixed period. She can re-enter her home only on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday, but it must be either the first day after the new moon or else whichever of these three days falls most closely before the full moon. Although this is the Badaga custom, today one out of five girls would instead go to the nearest town and, in Tamilian fashion, consult an astrologer as to the most auspicious day for re-entering the house. On that day she bathes outside the house, puts on a set of totally new clothes, and cuts her nails with a small knife. Along with the other new clothes she is given the traditional headcloth, which she ties over her head before entering the home or which is replaced by the end of a *sa:ri* held over her head, if she has adopted that mode of dress (Hockings 1979a). Only after sunset, when she can see stars, does the girl cross the threshold, doing so with the right, auspicious foot first. It is reported that she used to be led up to the threshold by five elderly women (Francis 1908: 131). Once inside she goes to the doorway that joins the two main rooms, kneels down, and touches her head to the floor. By this gesture she acknowledges that the further room, the *ogamane*, is a sacred place which she will never pollute by her menses. As the girl bows down, older people in that house say a prayer. She then stands and bows her head to the hand of the oldest person in the house, and then to all other relatives present. Next, accompanied by another girl of similar age such as a sister, she goes round the village and bows in the same manner to all people older than herself. On that occasion each household must offer her something to eat as a symbol of their mutual kinship. Generally the girl is given milk, but in a large village she may only taste a drop of that milk because she could not drink so much. And although the village may be large, the bowing cannot be postponed

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ing and start the housework, she would pollute the food were she not to wash first. She must bathe after having had intercourse, and older women in the household watch to see that she does so. It would be a major sin for a woman to attend to her children in the morning without bathing first, and if her child dies in infancy her husband's mother may blame her for having killed it by this terrible omission.

Young couples generally have coitus with the man lying on top of the girl, his legs outside hers. If this does not satisfy her she wraps her legs around his buttocks. Otherwise she will certainly be more satisfied if she sits astride her husband while he sits on the edge of the bed. If necessary she will fondle him to arouse his enthusiasm. It is said that one needs a large penis to satisfy a woman properly. Without both testicles the penis will not stiffen effectively: this is indeed their only function. These intimate details can become a subject of ribaldry when a girl is noticed to be visiting her parents too often: people may chide the husband for having a small organ, or suggest he try the second and third positions just described, or else nickname him *O:gotte* ("one-ball").

The amount of sexual activity depends on the husband's stamina and interest, and becomes progressively less as he gets older. Until their first child is born a couple may do it several times nightly, two or three times a week. After a birth has occurred they probably do it less often, and should not recommence coitus until the fifth month after the birth. Young married men boast to their friends about the number of times they have done it in one night; but such statements are necessarily prone to exaggeration. The terminology used in such bawdy discussions may range from *ke:vatu* (a noun — "fuck") to the somewhat more seemly *ma:duvatu* (similarly translatable, but literally meaning "doing"). *Katira* ("it makes, does") is generally used of animals, but may occur in reference to a lusty man in the phrase *e:ru katira*, "to fuck like a buffalo." (This is considered something of a compliment.) The usual pattern of intercourse seems to recognize a "safe period." Couples have coitus once or twice in the period between the sixth and the fourteenth or fifteenth days after menstruation, which they rightly consider to be the period when conception may occur. Those however who want no more children have intercourse only from the twenty-fifth or twenty-sixth day after the previous menstruation.

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826 829 842 It is important that a child should look like a mixture of both parents, even though it is believed to develop solely from the man's semen when in the mother's womb. If it resembles only one of them, that parent will die within a year of the child's birth. The skin should preferably be light in complexion, and relatives will then be very proud of it. If a child is born with grey hair or light-coloured eyes, however, it is felt the family will not like it.

844 787 Badagas also believe that if a woman's first birth is a daughter, she will have further births. If the seventh birth is a daughter and the eighth a son, then the family will prosper. People also say that if while crawling the infant is seen to peer at its genitals, the next child born to the mother will be of the opposite sex.

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Principles of Child Care

5.7. Underlying the practice of caring for children are certain core values about the human body which Badaga encapsulate in a few proverbs and can sometimes be persuaded to talk about. What some of these proverbs point to is a need to accept human diversity, and even deformity. One asks rhetorically, "Will all begotten children be real children?" And another proverb makes the same comment in reference to dissimilarities between siblings: "The stomach that has given birth to various people is one; those people are of different sense and different complexion." Similarly, "Are there five even fingers ?" Deformities in children are not of course welcomed—"It is bad if you have a lame child; it is bad if you see a blind man"—yet the individual should not feel embarrassed about a defect: "After the boils have formed, what if you feel shy and repugnant about them ?" Chronic illness also has to be tolerated in relatives and treated: "Even if she coughs she is our woman; even if she looks thin she is a grander woman."

Several proverbs reflect a concern with that hardy anthropological question, the relative strength and influence of nurture and of nature in the individual's personality: "Even if one has forgotten one's own begotten children, one won't forget learnt [bad] habits;" the latter are more important than inborn senses. Indeed, some people would go blind rather than give up a bad habit: "Even if your eyes become black a learnt [bad] habit won't disappear." In direct contrast, though, "Inborn habits won't go away even if you burn a man." Badagas believe that inborn habits (*huttu buddi*) are permanent, whereas learnt ones (*katta buddi*) are not.

A number of proverbs relate to the family relationships that involve children, and the way youngesters should be brought up. A certain firmness is counseled: "Children should be brought up under control, and a disobedient wife should have been sent back home." Similarly, "It is said, if the children are to be good, the mother should be good enough [herself]". Badagas believe that children acquire their qualities from the mother. Even so, "That woman will not know the nature of the girl she gave birth to." Kindness and forgiveness are valued in dealing with children. Thus, "If we caress the head of an orphan boy, our own children will grow up of their own accord" (Metz 1864: 94); "Will a child die from the stripes of a mother ?" (Metz 1864: 97); "Cats and

parents train them, children begin blowing their own noses in this way. 854

5.10. During the first few weeks of life the baby's cranium is elongated by manipulation. Mothers used to be proud of this shape, but the practice is now a rare one. Beginning on the eighth day after birth, the manipulation is done every morning and night, and the limbs are also massaged. A woman warms her hands in front of the fire, covers them with clarified butter, and then presses them lightly on the infant's chest. Next the arms, thighs, legs, feet, knees and elbows are pressed strongly. The nose is pressed together from both sides, so that it becomes higher and less wide. Finally the cranium is squeezed between both hands (Jagor 1876: 196). Not knowing about this custom, a few anthropologists have commented on the anomalous dolichocephaly of the Badagas, so much in contrast with the mesaticephalic and brachycephalic crania of their ancestral homeland in Mysore (Thurston 1909: 67). 856

5.11. Badagas say that until the ninth day of life a baby cannot see or understand anything, although it has vision. This state may last even till the fortieth day, but usually it is after the ninth day that a baby is credited with hearing, sight and understanding. Between the fortieth and sixtieth days its understanding develops, and it recognizes its parents.

From its fortieth day the women begin to make the child laugh. It is felt they must make it laugh between then and its sixtieth day, and also make it cry by taking something away from it, otherwise the child will be considered dumb. If it will neither laugh nor cry, old people will peer into its mouth and if they can see a defect of the uvula then they know the child is dumb. There is no medicine to rectify this. If the child talks the uvula will grow; if he is silent, it will not. Till the fifth or sixth month no one should make a loud noise near the child, lest it become deaf. A child may be born dumb but it cannot be born deaf. 856 826 828

5.12. After the third month of a baby's life the mother will resume her normal fieldwork duties it she is poor; but if well-to-do she will wait until after its sixth month. The insecurity that an infant might feel as a result of now losing its mother's attention for many hours of each day is minimized by the care lavished on it by other female relatives, including its older sisters. Most commonly for the next few years the child's grandmother looks after it all day. (I 854 (603)

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representing 108 protective spells that had been said while it was being made, was put round the neck of a Badaga infant to protect him from all sorts of evil and illness. Nowadays a talisman is often worn instead. It consists of a tiny sheet of copper on which a magical symbol has been engraved, placed inside a silver cover, and tied round a child's neck after a hen or goat has been sacrificed. Both of these items were made by non-Badagas living in the Coimbatore Plain. Different kinds of talisman ward off illness, possession by ghosts, "bad winds," barrenness, failure in trading, or failure in courtship. Today a talisman is only bought after a child (or occasionally an adult) has been sick, to ward off a recurrence of that illness. In the last century children's talismans were reportedly "kneaded from earth and ashes taken from funeral pyres" (Reclus 1885: 232).

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THERMAL BURNS: DRY (*benda hunnu*)

5.24. Children sometimes have pus-filled swellings and rashes on the skin caused not by maladies so much as by earlier treatments. Thus one small boy reportedly had such wounds on the forehead, two over the nipples, two over the navel, two more to the right and left of it, and one on the abdomen, all caused by burning with the rhizome of the sweet flag. Girls often had slime smeared on their festering new tattoo wounds (Jagor 1876: 196; cf. 7.9).

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LEUKODERMA (*sullu*)

5.25. Albinoism occurs because the body is "overheated." Alhinos generally die in infancy, but some "ripen" till they attain the colour of their parents. The disease appears after birth, it is said, and affects either some parts or the entire body. Today only certain Kurumbas still know the plants necessary for a herbal cure, although Badagas once knew them too.

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ALOPECIA AREATA (*tare mande*)

5.26. If a newborn child has scant hair or patchiness on the head, it is shaved half-a-dozen times, and then the head-shaving ceremony is held at an unusually early age. If this does not

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improve the hair, two other procedures can be followed. Either the hair is washed, using the bark of *toreko:ḷu* for soap; or else some tiny buds of common bracken are ground up till they form an oily paste. This is used as a shampoo for some days when washing the baby's head.

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A disease that occurs among youngsters causes patchy baldness, as clumps of hair fall out. It is said that "insects" are eating at it and so they must be killed. A piece of hard, hairy bezoar stone, called "hair-diamond," is bought in a bazaar. It is dipped in milk and then rubbed onto the bald patch repeatedly until it bleeds. Then "the insects inside die," I was told.

ORTHODONTICS 856

5.27. "It is bad if a tooth sticks out; it is bad if a river passes beyond the river bank." Thus if a child's tooth is not growing in the right direction an older woman of the household soon tries to bend it into position. She works at this every morning after the child wakes up, and before he eats, for one or two weeks. There are two procedures: either the child sits by the fire and the tooth is held in a cloth that has been heated over the fire; or else the cloth is dipped in very cold water before use. *Ma:dua*, a mouth disease common among children, is described later (6.39).

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TONSILITIS (*tonde kaṭalu*) 752 826

5.28. In earlier days some therapists grew the nails of the left thumb and index finger for use in tonsilectomy. Tonsils were taken out after they ached or swelled so much that the child could not eat. Someone pressed the back of the tongue down with a cooking skillet, so that the child could not close his mouth, while others held his head and arms to keep him still. The therapist put her thumb and index finger down the throat and pinched the tonsils off with her long sharpened nails. (They could be thrown away anywhere.) A pancake made of fresh finger millet was then prepared and kept aside until it was cool and dry. Then it was cut into small pieces and these were

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dried further. Finally the patient swallowed the pieces without chewing them first, so that their sharp edges would cut off any parts of the tonsil that remained. The pieces were swallowed before each of the next two meals following the operation. After this the patient just took the ordinary meals, but was advised to wash his mouth out with salty water for one or two days.

757 [825] COUGH (*kemmalu*)

5.29. The blood of a hare (*Lepus nigricollis*) used to be given as a throat medicine to children suffering from a cough (Thurston 1912: 85). Today the stem of a peacock feather is used instead to cure a cough or cold in young children. It is rubbed on a stone to produce a minute amount of powder, which is then mixed with powdered rhizome of the sweet flag and a little honey, and swallowed by the child. For babies, however, nothing but a half teaspoonful of honey is given, and for children between one and four years this is increased to a full teaspoonful. Only the honey from sealed cells of honeycomb is used as a cough medicine, although Badagas do use the honey from unsealed cells as a foodstuff.

755 SINGULTUS (*selamudalu*)

5.30. Someone should blow in an infant's ear to cure its hiccups. If this is not successful, then one blows on the top of its head.

757 825 PERTUSSIS (*kokkare*)

5.31. The flesh of the Nilgiri langur (*Presbytis johnii*) used to be sold in local bazaars as a cure for whooping-cough (Thurston 1906: 271); I have heard that it is still available, although illegally so since the animal became a protected species.

856 755 732 [826] [854] RICKETS (*sotte*)

5.32. If a baby is born with its limbs bent nothing can be done about it, although massage will be attempted in infancy, as we mentioned above (5.10). If it is thought there is no strength in the waist "because of the nerves in the hip," a treatment can be tried. Instead of bathing the baby in regular hot water, some water in which rice or preferably little millet, has been cleaned is kept, and each evening for a week or two this is heated for the daily

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this purpose the fresh dung of a young cow which has never calved is preferred: Badagas can tell at a glance if it is the right kind of animal because it should digest its food well. Every four hours the therapist removes the thread, lets the pus flow, and when this stops puts the thread back in the hole. Several times a day, when the cowdung becomes too dry, a fresh coating of it is applied. The swelling should cure in two or three days by this method.

MELANOMA (*bippiri*)

6.3. If when the medicine is first applied the swelling is too big to be called a *ne:ga:le*, but it does not have a head on it, then it is a case of *bippiri*. This can in fact get started alongside a *ga : le*, if all the pus is not removed from the latter. The *bippiri* has to be treated with the bark of a tree (details unavailable).

752 GOITRE (*kaṇḍa ma:le*)

A goitre is punctured with red-hot needles; or else treated with thorn-apple. Other big swellings are usually cut off, especially if they fail to respond to the above-mentioned medicines. During the present century such surgery has been done with a razor, but before that a piece of broken bottle glass was used.

826 164 753 DEPIGMENTATION OF SKIN, OR VITILIGO (*sullu*)

6.4. Patches of white skin on the body are called *sullu*. This is a disease for which there is no medicine. It is caused by the bite of the blindworm (*Typhlops braminus*), even when the patient is unaware he has been bitten.

164 (*taddu*)

6.5. Another disease which causes dry light coloured patches on the facial skin is *taddu*. Before going to sleep patients put oil on these patches. There is also another treatment: a relative takes a piece of dry cowdung, and rubs or touches it against the patches, while saying a special formula. The important thing is for the relative to be of the opposite sex to the patient, mature but unmarried, and in the relationship of a classificatory spouse—someone the patient might later want to marry (Badagas are polygynous). As this person touches

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thigh, an ulcer on the knee and extensive cellulitis of the calf muscle caused the most excruciating pain at the slightest movement. She had been in this state at home for over a month, quite neglected by the family. . . . We opened the abscesses and gave penicillin in large doses. For over two months she had to be treated. . ." (Ketti Medical Mission 1953: 4-5).

6.45. Badaga youths once used to engage in a non-ceremonial procedure designed to strengthen their wrists so that they could manage to milk large numbers of buffalo. A fire was made by rubbing fire-sticks together, during the dry summer months when men were out on the downland grazing their herds. A helper would then take a piece of glowing charcoal and burn one or two lines across the arms just above the back of the wrists. The burns were then left to heal (Thurston 1909: 83). Something similar was done with a branding iron on the front thighs of oxen, with a view to making them strong for ploughing.

FRACTURE (*oḍeda ilu*)

6.46. The Badaga technique for setting bones involves first feeling to discover whether a bone is broken. If it is, the therapist manipulates it until it is in the correct position. She then collects either Jamaican switch sorrel or eucalyptus leaves and ties a thick pad of them at the point of fracture. For a broken arm or leg two or three splints of wood are then tied along the limb, or a bamboo milk container (*aṇḍe*) is split in two for this purpose. The patient rests for three days and nights without moving the limb. After that the therapist removes the splints and leaves, and checks the fracture by manipulation. If it is not yet repaired another pad of leaves is tied on with splints for a further three days. This process may have to be repeated often, for larger bones can take a month to heal. In the case of a fractured rib, cranium or jaw, the leaves are ground up and applied as a thick paste to the fracture. A cloth is then tied over

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121 ideas about how the human body works; and this is by no means easy. Many Badagas have studied biology in college or high school; a few are qualified doctors (M.B.B.S.); others again have butchered dead animals; while yet others can at least claim to have someone in their family who has acquired some knowledge of physiology by one of the above avenues. And popular magazines that Badagas read now contain medical sections concerned with their readers' health. Knowing how pervasive this kind of knowledge has become during the present century, I had to be very careful in my choice of an informant who could explain to me the indigenous Badaga notions of how the body functions. I finally selected a man who believes himself to be about 80 years old (in 1977), who is illiterate and has never attended school, who is a Wodeya, and hence orthodox, conservative, and vegetarian, who has never butchered an animal, and who practises some medical cures. What he knows of medicine and physiology he learnt from his illiterate father, and to a lesser extent from his mother, early in the century. His village is situated midway between the villages of my other medical informants, and no further than 5 kms from any of them.

759 After listening to this man for some hours, I realized that
827 ordinary, uneducated peasants like him can have the confidence to become therapists, winning recognition and trust for their craft, because the village Badaga who is their primary client accepts that the workings of the body are a much simpler system than anything we know of in the Western world. Very broadly, such people see human physiology as a single system, with everything centering on the belly. They do not know of the nervous or muscular systems, and their ideas about the circulation of the blood are so rudimentary that do not recognize the role of the heart in this. They conceive of a single organ in the chest, the *nenju*, which is both the heart and the lungs in our terminology, but which is of no particular importance in their scheme of things. Of course they know that the heart beats, but they believe this to be simply the sound of air vibrating in the *nenju* as it passes down to the belly by the process of breathing.

827 10.13. There are about 16 organs in the body, and nearly all of
826 them are connected somehow with the belly, which is thus responsible for digestion, blood circulation, reproduction, breathing, smell, and even sight and speech.

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Food goes through the mouth into a tube which passes down to a stomach (*alle*) on the right side of the abdomen just above the navel. There is a second *alle* adjoining it, on the left, and here the body stores liquids, which reach it by a separate tube from the mouth. The two *alle* are joined by a third tube called *koḍalu* which "keeps them in balance," because liquid can flow through it to mix with the food or *vice versa*. The real mixing occurs however in the belly (*aḍi hotte*), which lies around and below the navel, and is a large organ. A tube connects the belly with each of the two *alle*. Here blood is prepared from the mixed food, and is sent to all parts of the body through arteries (*narambu*). The actual digestion is carried out with the assistance of a number of worms, about the size of a pencil though fatter in the middle. These worms remain alive in the belly and eat our food there. A man must have at least one big worm there or he will die. It is perhaps because they are living things that they need air. In any event, when breathing is occurring air passes through the two nostrils, the mouth, the eyes and the ears, by a single tube to the *nenju*, and then continues from there to the belly, where the air is needed for digestion. The evidence for all this is found in flatulence, and in cases where a patient's stool contains worms.

An important unit within the belly is the colon (*karu*), a tube about 3 cms in diameter which must remain vertical or else the patient will die. I have already described (6.58) how diarrhoea can result from a displaced colon, and the techniques for getting it back in position.

The head is important for sense, and it is recognized that the brain (*mu:le*) does the thinking. It is not however connected with the eyes, ears, mouth or any other organ. Speech originates in the belly, and the tongue (*na:lange*) helps in talking—its only function. The larynx (*suttage*) however has nothing to do with speech; it is simply the gateway through which tubes carrying air, food and liquid pass into the body.

Muscle (*kenḍa* or *kaṇḍa*) is merely a swelling where, because a limb has been bent (i.e., "flexing a muscle" in our terminology), some extra blood gets stored up by constriction of the arteries. Similarly a fat stomach is caused by lack of exercise or manual labour, with the result that blood gets stored up in the stomach instead of circulating to the extremities. A fat person is nicknamed *balla hotte* (literally "Big Basket Belly"), and he wants little food

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827 because the digestion has already produced such a store of blood.
826 There seems to be no conception of layers of fat lying under the skin.

The existence of a skeleton is recognized. Thus the backbone allows us to stand up erect. Outside it there is a large vein, which is necessary for life to continue. Both large and small bones have been given by God, to aid us in working.

[84] Reproduction is conceived of as a somewhat separate subsystem, but it too centres on the belly; and again it is by God's grace that there are two sexes. He has given us hair only in certain parts of the body to differentiate us from animals. Furthermore, he has given moustaches and beards to men and breasts to women, in order to distinguish between the sexes. It is also God's will that only men have semen, and only women have menses. Inside the
826 belly of women, but not of men, there is a bag, the womb (*ku:su*
827 *pae*) where a foetus grows. The foetus is formed entirely from
842 semen, which is why copulation is essential for conception. Blood
843 comes to the child after digestion has occurred in the mother's belly, and the foetus grows with this blood. Without conception this blood becomes waste each mouth. Urine and faeces are simi-
827 larly waste products of the digestion process in the belly.

After birth, milk flows from the belly to the breasts, and is
826 sucked through the nipples (*ma: ru*). These are thought to be the
827 outside part of the *nenju*, and it is by God's grace that only in women do they give milk.

The semen is another product of the belly, and it passes from there to the penis during coitus. The function of the *he:ḍu* (scrotum and testicles) is simply to effect an erection; it is not a source of semen.

Parts of the body present from birth do not grow continuously, but hair, being like grass, does. Nevertheless a child does grow slowly if it is fed properly, just as vegetables do if they are manured. If one's *nenju* pulsates weakly, then that person will become weak. If he does not take food and drink he will die, for all the other functions of the body will stop.

Diagnosis

128 10.14. The preceding few chapters have presented an excursion into the ethnomedicine of the Badagas, as described to me by some

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It is true that different Badaga therapists may give varying diagnoses of a complaint, and the recommended treatment will vary accordingly. A patient should follow the advice of the superior and most influential among the therapists he consults. A general Badaga attitude towards "experts" is expressed in a proverb: "It is half bad if you do something you know about, entirely bad if you do it when you are ignorant." The point is that a knowledgeable person will at least know what risks he is taking: mistakes are tolerated, blunders are not, as one informant put it. An incompetent therapist or midwife may be cut down to size with another proverb: "By claiming to have qualifications he became king; by spoiling it he became a poor man."

10.15. In ancient Sanskrit texts (Charaka Samhita I, etc.) it is stated that there are three aspects to man: behaviour, mind, and health (*pittam*). Although Badaga therapists have not been able to read such texts, they do believe there are three arteries in the wrist, one controlling each of these factors. These arteries pulsate, and one can tell whether they are "good" or not. In one small village of about three hundred people where I worked there were four men who had this diagnostic skill, but none of them ever practised as a therapist. I was told that such Badagas can check the pulse, on the right wrist of a male and the left of a female, to determine which aspect of the body is upset. Its associated artery will be pulsing irregularly. Athough being a diagnostician seems to be viewed as an informal and unimportant role by Badagas, it is clear that these men actually play a crucial part in deciding whether or not a person needs some therapeutic treatment; and to this extent there is a male surveillance over the (mainly female) therapists and their work. In the village just mentioned, for instance, it is worth noting that one of the four diagnosticians was the son of the only therapist there *and* was also the traditional (though inactive) headman. The other three men commanded a certain amount of respect too because of their social positions.

10.16. Dreams are not considered to cause illness, but they are certainly diagnostic of problems to come and are treated as omens by the Badagas. So if one dreams about snakes, it means there is something impure and thus threatening in the house. If one dreams of eating honey, he will get cold and become ill. If a woman dreams of eating fruit, especially oranges, she will become pregnant before the next menses. If she dreams of losing her nose-

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754 177 753 755 (c) Illness can also be the work of non-Badaga shamans or sorcerers, who can send a bad spirit into the victim. As with ghost possession, it has to be removed by an exorcist who knows the appropriate spells. It is said that in earlier days every Kurumba who had learnt sorcery was allowed to try his power sout. This would be decided by a formal council of the tribe, who would give the novices a stipulated period, usually one to four weeks, during which the young men could test their abilities. The Badagas would then be warned of what was to come, so the villagers could take every precaution and stay indoors at night. Each youth was permitted to kill one man by sorcery during this period. Deaths in the Badaga community were also occasionally ascribed to the sorcery of Todas (Rivers 1906: 261, 635); and Kurumbas say there are many Badaga sorcerers too.

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828 753 783 (d) Emotional and mental problems are otherwise said to be the result of sins done by a man's ancestors, whereas bodily diseases are in most cases an effect of the patient's own sins, as in the case of ulceration cited below (see *i*). Thus if the wealthy man becomes poor, or a poor man becomes rich, he attributes the change of fortune to the deeds of his ancestors. If a man lacks appetite, or does not enjoy his life or possessions, then he has a sickness resulting from the sins of his ancestors. There is no cure for it; and so if many cures are attempted and none works, it is thereby known that he has an illness caused by ancestral sin. Leprosy and mental diseases are seen as ultimately caused by that same sin. (As an explanation for the therapist's impotence this is of course very effective.)

732 826 (e) Often we find frequency of an infirmity being explained as an effect of "blood." For example, in one family there are two girls and five boys. One boy and both girls are normal, but three other boys are deaf and dumb, and one is fairly deaf but can talk. As the situation was explained to me, "there must be some wrong in the parents' blood." This is perhaps still an allusion to ancestral sin.

753 261 (f) More immediate causes of some illnesses lie in one's diet or bodily activities, even in uncleanliness. Among the dietary problems there is a general malady called *so:lu*, "over-heat," caused by eating insufficient milk products. Eating bad food, or eating too quickly, can also bring unfortunate results.

753 826 (g) Over-exertion may dislodge the colon or an artery and bring

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illness. Sexual over-exertion can similarly make a young man incapacitated (cf. 3.10).

(*h*) The odour that follows on an act of coitus, or the "bad wind" that emanates from a corpse, or from a childbirth, are widely held to be responsible for illness and even death in unweaned infants.

(*i*) Some misfortunes, like bites, stings and burns, are caused by quite obvious external agents. What we would consider equally obvious cases of infection, however, may be considered by Badagas to have a more complicated causation ; as in the reported case of a woman with

> an extensive ulceration from the right arm pit to the right shoulder and to the right breast. It was full of black-headed maggots .... It seems she had been in this state for one and a half months in the village ... The rest of the crowd made most unkind remarks at her expense. Some said that it was on account of her bad life in a previous birth that she had to suffer thus. Her husband's brother said that I must either cure her soon or put her to a painless end .... I sprinkled into the deep ulcerated tissue a small quantity of chloro form, and the maggots fell dead in hundreds .... There followed an uneventful recovery ... (Ketti Medical Mission 1949: 4-5)

(The writer was of course an Indian doctor trained in scientific medicine.)

(*j*) Depigmentation of the skin is caused by the supposed "bite of a blindworm."

(*k*) Nowadays a "germ theory" is not unknown, as for example in the explanation offered me for why teeth rot. Cleanliness of body is strongly approved of today.

(*l*) In the case of plague it is thought that mosquitoes carry the disease from rats to men. This modern-sounding but inaccurate theory probably arose from the publicity that surrounded the mosquito eradication programme on the lower slopes some year ago.

(*m*) And finally there is a belief that bad luck and illness tend to repeat themselves for an individual: as a proverb puts it, "The very foot which is scarred will be hurt again."